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Why Healthcare Needs the Patient Experience Feedback Hub



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Healthcare is changing rapidly, and consumer focus has become a priority for most organizations. In fact, [a recent survey of healthcare executives by Kaufmann Hall](https://www.kaufmanhall.com/news/legacy-healthcare-organizations-continue-lag-consumer-focused-efforts) (https://www.kaufmanhall.com/news/legacy-healthcare-organizations-continue-lag-consumer-focused-efforts) found that 81% have identified “improving consumer experience” as a high priority for their organization. But only 11% of healthcare executives feel that their organization has the capabilities to deliver positive consumer experience.

This focus on the consumer was already critical at the start of 2020. But the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for transformation, as consumer expectations have shifted to receiving safe and positive healthcare experiences.

To support this changing dynamic, healthcare providers need to accelerate their journey to deliver an effective patient experience across every touchpoint, from booking an appointment to paying a bill. A Patient Experience Feedback Hub is key to making this journey a success.

Patient Experience and the Digital Front Door

So, just what is a Patient Experience Feedback Hub, exactly? Quite simply, this is a centralized platform that captures feedback from multiple sources to create a holistic “voice of the customer” and understand brand sentiment. The concept of sourcing customer feedback from multiple touchpoints to support a unified brand experience is not new. Industries ranging from retail to financial services realize we are living in a [feedback economy](https://reputation.com/resources/blog/how-to-win-in-the-new-feedback-economy/) (https://reputation.com/resources/blog/how-to-win-in-the-new-feedback-economy/) in which customer ratings and reviews power the success of the enterprise. But healthcare is still catching up.

For many years, clinical quality and safety were the only metrics healthcare providers cared about. But in the era of consumerism, patients have a broader view of what constitutes quality care. The care experience isn't confined to the brief time spent with a clinician in an exam room. Was it difficult to find a parking spot? Was the doctor running late? Did the billing department miscode a treatment and create a headache for the patient with their insurance company? You better believe the patient is going to speak up, as well they should. They've learned to expect a better experience across every touchpoint.

In addition, the experience extends beyond the four walls of the building. Patients expect provider websites to contain accurate and useful information about crucial details such as insurance plans accepted. They expect personalized recommendations and communication tailored to the individual.

Healthcare providers understand that digital is the key to improving the entire experience, online and offline. Healthcare coined the term “digital front door” referring to a strategy that improves the patient experience through technology most consumers are already using. A digital front door is more than a website (although it includes the website). A digital front door can be a doctor’s Google My Business listing showing appointment hours and a link to schedule an appointment online. It can include the portal where a patient can access her complete medical information and have a virtual visit with a doctor. In fact, the digital front door is the connective thread for the entire healthcare consumer experience.

Patient experience leaders are now beginning to think of digital in another way: as a powerful means to collect information from all these interactions to improve the experience. This is where the Patient Experience Feedback Hub comes into play.

The Patient Experience Feedback Hub is a central repository for getting a complete view of the patient experience. The hub collects feedback in the form of surveys, ratings, reviews and other sources. It doesn’t matter where the feedback comes from — you can collect it in our platform and analyze sentiment across multiple focus areas, from nursing care to wait times and billing. Each source of data enriches your hub and contributes to a more robust understanding of the voice of the customer.

Patients can give you feedback in many ways: a chat interaction, a review on Google My Business, a social media post, or a CAHPS survey, to name a few. Each source of feedback is limited. No single channel gives you a holistic view. But when you collect and study all sources together, you start to see patterns emerge – patterns that suggest cause-and-effect from one department to the next.

Sometimes you detect problems that are isolated, such as complaints about parking created by a temporary inconvenience (such as construction) or an easily fixable problem (your exam rooms are too cold). Or you might encounter something more systemic and serious, such as deteriorating quality of care that, on investigation, is rooted in physician burnout or lack of training for new personnel – problems that require a deeper look.

Oftentimes, coming up with a solution requires the patient experience officer to look broadly across the entire facility to find the root of a problem – an example being a poor mobile app experience that has nothing to do with the quality of care, but rather a technology glitch to resolve.

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Here's how it works in practice.

Early last year, one of our healthcare partners noticed a surge in negative sentiment about staff at one particular hospital. When the team noticed this pattern, they alerted the leader.

Upon digging deeper, the operations leaders uncovered the root of the problem; the location had undergone some recent turnover, and the new staff members were not up to speed on all the protocols for shift change. As a result, the communication was inconsistent, and this confusion was often evident to the patients. Armed with this insight, the facility leadership initiated new training for the staff. Not only did the location improve its online sentiment, but "staff" became the category with the largest volume of positive feedback.

Ask for Feedback

What are the keys to making a Patient Experience Feedback Hub work? One is a commitment to asking for feedback. All the time. Everywhere. Here's the reality about feedback. People who have a negative experience are going to find a way to blast you online whether you ask them or not. Typically, this comes in the form of a negative review on Google or Facebook.

But most people aren't going to go out of their way to provide you with positive feedback unless you ask. And you have to make it easy by texting or emailing a patient survey, by sharing a link to Google where they can review you, and so on. When you request feedback via surveys and reviews, two things happen:

- You can understand a complete picture of the voice of the consumer, with a statistically significant volume of information needed to be a reliable source of insights.
- You will collect more positive feedback that can be shared to promote your brand.

Connect the Dots

It's not enough to ask for input. You must synthesize it from multiple channels and learn from it. When you bring multiple feedback channels into one dashboard, you start to view each touchpoint not as a single interaction but as part of your *brand* – the total experience you provide.

Many healthcare providers are getting much better at collecting feedback. But they also need to:

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